

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Job fair in Ontario continues Governor's initiative of matching veterans with employers and jobs

Governor Brown continued the Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet (HAH-HAV) governor's initiative with a job and resource fair at the Ontario Convention Center today that brought together veterans seeking jobs, employers with openings to fill, and resource agencies offering a wide range of employment services.

Among the 100 employers participating in the fair were BNSF Railway, California Steel, Church & Dwight manufacturing, Double Eagle Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, Heritage Foods, the Los Angeles Police Department, Northwest Pipe Co., the U.S. Border Patrol and the U.S. Forest Service. Also participating were 85 private and 15 public resource and service organizations.

Now in its fifth year, the 2012 HAH-HAV fairs are being held at 10 locations throughout the state. The fairs offer veterans one-stop access to career, training and education opportunities. Current data shows that young veterans are particularly in need of assistance. The 2011 California unemployment rate for veterans in the 20-24 year-old age group was 37.1 percent, which is more than double the 17.6 percent unemployment rate in the same age group who were not veterans.

In its first four years, the job fairs have linked 15,000 veterans with hundreds of employers and employment resource agencies. The fairs, funded this year by a \$250,000 grant, provide public agencies and private companies not only the opportunity to demonstrate their support of the veterans, community, but also to address their business needs by having access to a large pool of job-ready candidates.

"The Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet job fairs are springboards for our brave veterans who are coming home from serving overseas and seeking new lives as productive, employed members of society," said Pam Harris, Director of the Employment Development Department (EDD). "These exceptional men and women put their lives on the line for our freedoms. We owe it to them to help them transition from military life to civilian life. We are committed to matching these talented veterans with jobs that will open the way to a bright future."

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Peter James Gravett, secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), said of the fairs: "One of the best ways to honor our veterans for their selfless service and sacrifice is to help them find meaningful careers in civilian life."

The multi-agency initiative brings together EDD, CDVA, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards, and California Community Colleges. An energetic outreach through television, radio, newspapers and social media has helped to double and even triple the participation in these fairs by employers, schools, apprenticeship programs and other providers.

California is home to nearly two million veterans, the largest number in the nation. The EDD Workforce Services Offices play a key role in providing veterans with on-going job search services and case management. Veterans bring with them unique work skills and character traits valued by employers. Ninety-five percent of California veterans have high school diplomas and almost half have associate degrees or higher. Many of them have mastered high-tech skills in the military.

For more information about vet programs at EDD, please visit our website at http://www.edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/services_for_veterans.htm.

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